ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EP.115 "Elinor Stops the Squish"

By: Karen Moonah

Elinor's Question: *How do animals and plants protect themselves?*

Logline: *Elinor worries that the cupcake Olive wants to bring to school for Ms. Mole will get squished - so she comes up with a nature-inspired way to protect it.*

ET 1b) - Define a problem that can be solved by the design of a new or improved tool or technology. (Elinor and her friends define the problem of the fragile cupcake that needs protection

SEP 6a) - Constructing Explanations. Use background knowledge experience and data to construct reasonable explanations and theories of natural phenomena. Elinor works out that 'hard outsides' protect 'soft insides'.

SEP 6d) - Designing Solutions (Engineering) Use evidence to support a theory or solution to a problem. (Elinor and her friend observe how animals and plants in nature are protected by shells, and decide that a shell will protect their cupcake).

LS2 - Understand that animals have different body parts that are used in different ways to meet their needs, and that plants have different parts that help them survive and grow. Elinor observes the tough skin and shells of animals and plants that protect them.

ND3 - Understand that structures and materials in the natural world can be used or can inspire the engineering of structures with similar function in the designed world. Elinor and friends make a cupcake carrier out of a coconut.

Line Count - 93 Lines
Mains - Elinor, Ari, Olive, Mrs. Gorilla, Mz Mole (also in 108A Glasses)
Secondary: Rollie,
Locations: School, Park, Juice Cart, Town
Props: Pictogram calendar, Cupcake (squished and unsquished), ball, turtle, bananas, coconuts, oranges, june bug, snail, coconut shell holder for cupcake.

OUTLINE: January. 17, 2019

FIRST DRAFT: February 5th, 2019

SECOND DRAFT: February 25, 2019

POLISH: March 15, 2019

1. EXT. ELINOR'S SCHOOL - DAY

It's another clear day at Elinor's school. As we TRUCK IN, we hear Mz. Mole, just wrapping up 'circle time'.

1 MZ. MOLE (OS) 1
...and that's the end of the lesson, kids. Which means, it's time for...

2. INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

2 The kids sit in a semi-circle on the floor, with MZ. MOLE. 2

2 ARI/OLIVE/ELINOR/OTHER KIDS? 2
Snack time! / Yay! / Woo-hoo!

Her students get up and happily hurry to get their snacks from their bags. Mz. Mole turns to the chalk board, picks up an eraser, and starts cleaning it, <HUMMING> to herself. *

ARI and ELINOR have their SNACK BAGS in hand as they settle into side-by-side chairs at a TABLE, saving a spot for Olive. Ari does a jazzy little wiggle as he opens his bag.

3 ARI 3
Snack time, snack time... I loooove snack time! Let's see what I got... I got...

He pulls out CARROT STICKS. He looks mildly disappointed.

4 ARI (CONT'D) 4
Hm. Carrot sticks.

5 ELINOR (EXCITED) 5
Ari, you got carrot sticks! I LOVE carrot sticks, they're my favorite! Let's see what *I* got...

Elinor pulls out a BAG OF RAISINS. She looks mildly disappointed.

6 ELINOR (CONT'D) 6
Hm. Raisins.

7 ARI 7
Elinor, you got raisins! That's awesome, raisins are MY favorite!

They both look at their respective snacks, not too excited. Suddenly, they both realize the obvious solution, and grin.

8 ELINOR/ARI (UNISON) 8
Wanna share?

The kids happily take a bit of each other's snack to enjoy.

Elinor looks OFF towards the cloakroom area.

9 ELINOR 9
Olive? Did you find your snack?

CLOAKROOM AREA - Olive is still digging deep in her bag. She takes out SEVERAL HARDCOVER BOOKS, a JUMBO BOX OF CRAYONS...

10 OLIVE 10
It's in here somewhere... aha!
Found it.

Olive finally pulls out a rather crumpled SMALL BROWN BAG and heads back to join them. On the way, she passes a big WALL CALENDAR, with pictograms on special days. She double-takes.

ZOOM IN on a BIRTHDAY CAKE pictogram, with Mz. Mole's face.

Olive brightens! She hurries to join her friends.

11 OLIVE (LOW, URGENT) (CONT'D) 11
Elinor! Ari! Did you notice? It's
Mz. Mole's birthday tomorrow!

12 ARI 12
Teachers have birthdays?

13 ELINOR (CHUCKLING) 13
Of course they do. Let's do
something nice for her!

14 OLIVE 14
We could make her a picture?

CUT TO Mz. Mole, who is busy erasing the chalkboard, beside a whole wall-full of KID-DRAWN PICTURES of herself. She has raised a little chalk dust cloud, which makes her sneeze. <SFX: SNEEZE>

15 ARI (CALLS) 15
Bless you!
(quieter, to the girls)
She already has a *lot* of pictures.

16 ELINOR 16
How about a craft?

CUT TO: the teacher's desk, groaning under a collection of CRAFTS. (PENCIL CUPS, WALNUTS WITH GOOGLY EYES, etc.)

17 OLIVE (PART OS) 17
She has a lot of those, too. (beat)
I know! I'll bring her a cupcake
tomorrow! My mom made a whole batch *
for her book club. *In fact...*
(trunk trumpet, 'ta-da!')
I got one for a snack!

With great ceremony, Olive reaches into her snack bag and pulls out - a TOTALLY SQUASHED CUPCAKE. Her face falls.

18 OLIVE (DISAPPOINTED) (CONT'D) 18
Aw! It squished. I wonder how that
happened?

19 ELINOR (EMPATHIZES) 19
It must have gotten squished inside
your bag.

20 ARI (GENTLY) 20
You *do* carry a lot of stuff in your
bag, Olive.

SWISH PAN to Olive's bag, which is indeed straining to contain all the heavy books and things crammed inside. WIDEN to include Olive holding the squished cupcake in her hand.

21 OLIVE (NODS) 21
Oh. Yeah.

22 MZ. MOLE (OS) 22
Is everything all right, kids?

CUT TO Mz. Mole as she turns from the chalk-board, her glasses covered in dust. She wipes her glasses while still wearing them. By the time they're clear again -

- Olive, Elinor and Ari have zipped into an awkward tableau to block her view of the cupcake on the table.

23 OLIVE / ELINOR / ARI 23
Yes! / Fine! / There's no cupcake! *

Mz. Mole squints at them for a moment, shrugs good-naturedly then goes back to what she was doing.

24 ARI (RELIEVED) 24
Whew! Good thing I played it cool.
I'd hate to spoil the surprise.

Olive and Elinor share a look. *That* was playing it cool?

25 OLIVE (WORRIED) 25
Well, *I'd* hate to spoil the <u>cupcake</u> *
tomorrow. What if it goes 'squish'
inside my bag like this one?

26 ELINOR 26
Don't worry, Olive. We'll just have
to find a way to stop the squish!

Off her expression of deep thought, we DISSOLVE TO:

3. EXT. TOWN - DAY

After school, Elinor, Ari and Olive walk home together, brainstorming a solution to their cupcake conundrum. (Olive carries her very full bag.)

27 ELINOR 27
Maybe you could carry the cupcake
on a plate, so it doesn't squish?

28 OLIVE 28
I could... but what if I trip?

THOUGHT BUBBLE - Olive imagines herself carrying a plate with a cupcake on it, as she hikes down a path full of exaggerated obstacles. Rocks, tree roots, banana peels...

29 OLIVE (CONT'D) 29
Whoa... whoa... OOF!

Olive slips on a banana peel, and falls forward. <SQUISH!>

BACK TO SCENE. Ari nods, agreeing.

30 ARI 30
That would squish it all right.
What if I fly it to school?

THOUGHT BUBBLE - Ari imagines himself holding the cupcake as he flies. But since Ari's paw is connected to his wing, the cupcake goes up and down as he flies. Up, down, up, down, UP -

31 ARI (CONT'D) 31
WHOA!

- he loses his grip, and the cupcake arcs through the air!

IN THE SCHOOLYARD - It lands on Mz. Mole's head. <SPLAT!>

BACK TO SCENE. Elinor cringes, just thinking about it.

32 ELINOR 32
That might squish the cupcake too.

By now, they're passing a PARK. Suddenly, a big soft playground ball comes bouncing across their path.

33 ROLLIE (OS) 33
Heads up!

The ball misses them, but it does bounce over and <BONK> -

- A TURTLE, who was creeping along at the side of the path. He quickly pulls his head and limbs inside his shell.

34 ELINOR (DISMAYED) 34
Oh, no! Poor turtle!

Elinor rushes over, with Ari and Olive close behind. At the same time, ROLLIE (an ARMADILLO) enters.

35 ROLLIE 35
Sorry about that! Is the turtle okay?

ANGLE ON the turtle - who slowly peeks his head out. Then his legs pop out, and he looks up at the kids, seemingly unfazed.

36 ARI 36
(Phew.) Yeah, he's okay.

37 OLIVE 37
(chuckle) He hardly even noticed!

The turtle resumes its leisurely walk. Rollie is relieved.

38 ARI 38
He's a tough little guy.

ON Elinor, relieved but also *very* curious.

39 ELINOR 39
The ball just bounced off him. *

Meanwhile, Rollie retrieves his ball from the bushes.

40 OLIVE 40
What are you playing, Rollie?

41 ROLLIE (CASUALLY) 41
Oh, my sister and I are just bumping the ball back and forth.

Rollie tosses the ball in the air and playfully <BOUNCES> it off the shell on his upper back.

42 ELINOR (SURPRISED) 42
Doesn't that hurt?

43 ROLLIE 43 *
Nah. Us armadillos have a protective shell, see?

He <TAPS> on his own armour plates.

44 ROLLIE (CONT'D) 44
Nice and hard! Anyway, I gotta roll. See you later!

45 Rollie waves to Elinor, Ari and Olive, then heads OS to rejoin the game. 45

Elinor and her friends continue walking.

45 OLIVE 45
Wow. That's so cool.

46 ARI 46
It's like he has a helmet for his WHOLE BODY!

Elinor glances back at the turtle, and absorbs this information.

47 ELINOR 47
Hmm...

CUT TO:

4. EXT. MRS. GORILLA'S JUICE CART - MOMENTS LATER

As the kids continue home, Ari wipes his brow.

48 ARI 48
(Whew!) Speaking of 'whole body', my whole body is thirsty.

49 MRS. GORILLA (PART OS) 49
Well you came to the right place!

REVERSE ANGLE - they're approaching a JUICE STAND run by an effusive MRS. GORILLA. The stand is decorated and stocked with BANANAS, COCONUTS and ORANGES.

50 MRS. GORILLA (CONT'D) 50
Would you like a free sample of coconut water?

Smiling brightly, she holds up a coconut in one hand.

51 ELINOR 51
Yes, please! Thanks, Mrs. Gorilla.

52 OLIVE 52
Ooh, can I squeeze out the juice? I
do it all the time with oranges. *

Olive drops her heavy bag, and picks up a coconut that's
sitting out on the stand. Mrs. Gorilla looks a bit surprised. *

53 MRS. GORILLA 53
Oh! But - coconuts are a bit
different than oranges...

But Olive is already squeezing the hard-shelled coconut over
a cup as hard as she can, with her hands, then her trunk.

54 OLIVE 54
(strain) Wow. The outside of this *
coconut is *hard!* *

55 ARI (CONFIDENT) 55
I think you have to peel it first.
Like this!

Ari takes the coconut, and pries at it - with no luck.

56 ARI (CONT'D) 56
(strains) How're you supposed to
get into this thing?!

Mrs. Gorilla smiles.

57 MRS. GORILLA 57
You have to get through the shell.
I'll show you!

She takes the coconut back, and pokes a hole on the hard
shell with an MALLET and an AWL, then pours out the coconut
water into three small CUPS.

58 ELINOR 58
So *that's* how you get coconut water
out.

59 OLIVE 59
It's delicious!

60 ARI 60
Yeah!

While Olive and Ari talk to Mrs. Gorilla, Elinor curiously
examines the coconut shell.

61 MRS. GORILLA 61
And what brings you to the park today, kids?

62 OLIVE 62
Well, Mrs. Gorilla, we're trying to figure out how to stop the squish!

63 MRS. GORILLA 63
The squish?

Elinor shakes the coconut - there's still a little <SWISH> of liquid inside. She <TAPS> on it, feeling the hard shell.

64 ARI 64
Olive wants to bring a cupcake tomorrow for Mz. Mole's birthday, but everything Olive puts in her bag gets squished!

CUT TO Olive, as she gestures to her bag. The square outline of books can be seen through the fabric - it's STUFFED.

65 OLIVE 65
(shrugs, a bit sheepish)
I like to carry a lot of things.

66 MRS. GORILLA 66
I see! That IS a hard problem. Or... a soft and squishy problem?

Just then, Elinor has a realization.

67 ELINOR 67
That is SO INTERESTING! It isn't just turtles and armadillos that have shells to protect their insides. Coconuts have them too! *

68 ARI 68
Huh! That IS pretty cool.

69 MRS. GORILLA 69
That's right, Elinor! Lots of things in Nature have shells to protect them. Let's take a look around, and see!

70 ELINOR 70
Yeah! We need MORE OBSERVATIONS!

As Elinor and her friends rally around Mrs. Gorilla we hear the beginning of a song…

5. EXT. TOWN - SONG MOMENT - "A SHELL"

We FOLLOW Mrs. Gorilla, Elinor, Ari and Olive as they step away from the stand and pass through town, encountering a few other creatures with 'tough outsides'.

71 MRS. GORILLA/ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI 71

(sing)

ALL: A shell, a shell
Protected by a shell
A shell is such a clever way
To keep you safe and well

Just then, Elinor sees -

- A JUNE BUG in flight! Suddenly, it bumps into the side of a building and loses altitude -

ELINOR- There's a beetle,
ARI -Look how small!
OLIVE - Oops - it bumped into a wall!

- but the bug quickly recovers and they watch it fly away.

ELINOR -But see? It didn't hurt at all,
It has a kind of shell

They walk onward, singing -

ALL: A shell, a shell
Protected by a shell
A shell is such a clever way
To keep you safe and well

Ari points to a SNAIL, climbing up a sturdy plant stalk. A bird hops closer...

ARI: You see that snail? I have a hunch
A bird would like him for her lunch

...but when the bird tries to snap up the snail, its beak glances off the hard shell. The bird gives up and moves on.

OLIVE: But shells are much too hard to crunch
ELINOR: That's why it has a shell!

The three friends and Mrs. Gorilla skip onward through town and back to the fruit stand, singing -

(MORE)

MRS. GORILLA/ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI
ALL: A shell, a shell
Protected by a shell
A shell is such a clever way
To keep you safe and well

The SONG ENDS. By now, Mrs. Gorilla and the kids have circled back to their original positions at the fruit stand.

72 OLIVE 72
Wow, Mrs. Gorilla, I never knew so many things in Nature had hard outsides to protect their insides! *

73 MRS. GORILLA 73
Oh yes, Olive. Shells are *very* good protection.

ON Elinor, as she picks up a coconut and has a brainstorm.

74 ELINOR 74
And I just got an idea for how to protect Mz. Mole's cupcake!

Off Elinor's excited look, we TRANSITION TO:

6. EXT. ANIMAL TOWN - ESTABLISHING (TIME TRANSITION)

A HIGH, WIDE SHOT of Animal Town, as the sun sets, DAY fades to NIGHT, then the sun rises and DAY BREAKS again. The start of another school day... <SFX: SCHOOL YARD WALLA> *

7. EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

WIDE on the schoolyard, the next morning. Mz. Mole supervises as her STUDENTS trickle into the playground.

75 MZ. MOLE (CHEERY) 75
Hello, Rollie. Good morning, Sally.

CLOSER - Ari, Olive and Elinor are already there, huddled around Olive's bag. They're *wrapping* something inside it...

76 OLIVE (LOW) 76
I've never gift-wrapped something like this before. Hold the ribbon tight, Ari!

77 ELINOR (LOW) 77
Hurry, here comes Mz. Mole!

78 OLIVE (LOW) 78
Okay, ready?

ANOTHER ANGLE - as they all turn towards their teacher. Ari is holding their gift in his hands: a coconut, with a bow tied around it!

79 OLIVE / ELINOR / ARI (IN UNISON) 79
Happy birthday Mz. Mole!

Mz. Mole reacts with surprise and delight! But as Ari holds up the gift a little higher...

80 ARI 80
We got you a birthday - gift -

...he realizes that something is wrong. *His finger accidentally got tied into the bow!*

81 ARI (CONT'D) 81
Huh? Hey!

Surprised, Ari yanks his hand around, with the coconut still tied on. He finally shakes it off - but accidentally throws the coconut! The girls cringe -

82 OLIVE / ELINOR 82
Oh no! / Watch out!

- as the coconut flies through the air towards the play structure! It lands on the SLIDE, (<WHUMP!>) rolls a little way up, then gravity takes over and it comes rolling back -

83 ARI 83
I can't look!

(Ari hides his eyes - then peeks anyway.)

The coconut bounces across the ground, finally rolling to a stop at Mz. Mole's feet. She picks it up, amused.

84 MZ. MOLE (CHUCKLING) 84
My goodness! What do we have here?

Elinor, Olive and Ari come closer, sharing a worried look.

85 ELINOR (NERVOUS) 85
Uh. Better open it, and find out.

ANGLE ON Mz. Mole, as she slowly and dramatically opens the split-in-half coconut to reveal -

86 MZ. MOLE 86
(gasp) Oh, it's beautiful!

CLOSE ON a PERFECTLY INTACT CUPCAKE!

87 MZ. MOLE (PART OS) (CONT'D) 87
Thank you, kids! What a clever idea *
to put it inside a coconut shell. *

Olive grins.

88 OLIVE 88
We did it so it wouldn't get *
squished in my bag. *

89 ELINOR 89
We noticed that lots of animals and *
plants have hard outsides to
protect their insides. So we made a
coconut shell into a cupcake
carrier!

Mz. Mole tugs the cupcake out of a carved-out niche in the coconut 'meat'.

90 MZ. MOLE (IMPRESSED) 90
And there's even a snug little
pocket to hold the cupcake! *

91 ARI 91
Mrs. Gorilla scooped it out of the *
inside of the coconut for us. *

Elinor reaches into her own bag, with a playful smile.

92 ELINOR (GRINNING) 92
That means you aren't the *only* one *
with a special snack today, Mz. *
Mole... *

Elinor pulls out a clear container full of coconut meat.

93 ELINOR (CONT'D) 93
...we brought coconut to share!

As the other students <SFX: CLASSROOM LAUGH AND CHEER>, we PULL BACK and…

FADE OUT.